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PROG 10/13/83
CDA:JABUSHNELL
POL:JAALLITTO:MH
POL:JKING
POL-3 CDA CHRON

AMEMBASSY BUENOS
SECSTATE WASHDC, IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

JAB
JAA
JK
(DRAFT)

DEPT FOR ARA/SC AND HA/HR, LIMA FOR AMBASSADOR ORTIZ

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, AR
SUBJ: UPDATED HUMAN RIGHTS TRENDS IN ARGENTINA - II
REFS: (A) BUENOS AIRES 6431, (B) BUENOS AIRES 7187

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
(☒) Release () Excise () Deny
Exemption(s): _____
Declassify: () In Part () In Full
() Classify as _____ () Extend as _____ () Downgrade to _____
Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

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EF123, 178/293

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION UPDATES PARAGRAPH 21 OF REFTTEL A FOR POSSIBLE USE IN NEXT WEEK'S CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS:

-- Q. IS NOT ANTI-SEMITISM A MAJOR PROBLEM IN ARGENTINA?

-- A. NO. ARGENTINA HAS THE SEVENTH-LARGEST JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE WORLD, NUMBERING FROM 250,000 TO 400,000 (DEPENDING ON WHOSE FIGURES ARE USED). THERE ARE NUMEROUS SYNAGOGUES, AND THE COMMUNITY MAINTAINS SCHOOLS, COUNTRY CLUBS, AND OTHER FACILITIES. ANTI-SEMITISM IS OCCASIONALLY MANIFESTED IN GRAFFITI AND IN MINOR PUBLICATIONS NOW OFFERED REGULARLY ON NEWSSTANDS AS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION INCREASES DURING THE RETURN TO DEMOCRACY. THERE HAD NOT BEEN A MAJOR VIOLENT ATTACK AGAINST THE JEWISH COMMUNITY FOR SOME TIME UNTIL MAY, WHEN THE FRONT OF A JEWISH RESTAURANT IN BUENOS AIRES WAS MACHINE-GUNNED AS APPROXIMATELY 30 PEOPLE WERE DINING INSIDE. FORTUNATELY, NO ONE WAS HURT. IN OCTOBER, THE FRONTS OF A JEWISH PIZZERIA AND ANOTHER JEWISH RESTAURANT IN BUENOS AIRES WERE SHOT UP WHILE PEOPLE WERE INSIDE. NO ONE WAS HURT. SEVERAL SYNAGOGUES HAVE ALSO BEEN EXTERNALLY DEFACED OR VANDALIZED WITHIN THE LAST FEW MONTHS. ONE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 1983 AND PREVIOUS YEARS IN ARGENTINA, HOWEVER, IS THAT THIS YEAR NEARLY ALL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES (AND CANDIDATES FOR OTHER OFFICES, TOO) HAVE PUBLICLY CONDEMNED THE RECENT INCREASE IN ANTI-SEMITIC INCIDENTS. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF AN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT POLICY OF ANTI-SEMITISM. IN THE CASE OF ONE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE (A CLEANING LADY) WHO RECENTLY MADE DISPARAGING REMARKS TO SEVERAL SCHOOL CHILDREN ABOUT THEIR BEING JEWISH, THE AUTHORITIES INVESTIGATED THE MATTER, SUSPENDED THE EMPLOYEE FROM HER JOB DURING THE INVESTIGATION, AND TRANSFERRED HER AFTER CONFIRMING THAT SHE HAD MADE THE REMARKS. ARGENTINA HAS NO LAWS THAT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST JEWS, ALTHOUGH THE CONSTITUTION DOES STIPULATE THAT THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC MUST BE CATHOLIC. (FYI, THE OCTOBER 10 ISSUE OF NEWSWEEK REPORTS THAT "IN AUGUST A BOMB WAS DEFUSED OUTSIDE A JEWISH SCHOOL." WHEN WE TRIED TO CONFIRM THAT WITH DAIA, THE LEADING JEWISH ORGANIZATION IN ARGENTINA, WE WERE TOLD BY DAIA'S PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER THAT HE HAD NEVER HEARD OF SUCH AN INCIDENT.) BUSHNELL**

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